342 ded and especially unsanitary. But during most of the year nearly all activities during the 12 to 13 hours of daylight are carried on outside. After each rainy season the roof and walls are inspected for damage from heavy rain, hail and tornadoes, and, with repairs, a good tuqul can last twenty years.

The hut-building season begins usually a few months after the rainy season is over, in the month of Hedar, after the major harvest of cereals has been gathered and threshed. A tuqul is usually built in stages, interrupted by other chores. Since there is no danger of rain, the beams, saplings, withes, thatch grass can be selected from forest and bush at leisure, and left on the spot selected. But when a marriage approaches, especially during the main "mar- [476] riage season", the entire process can be speeded up to little over a week; and if there are not enough hands in one hamlet, other kinsmen and friends can be invited to the hut-building-party, the host supplying daily spiced meat stew, barley beer, etc., thus attracting as many as twenty men.

[361] The first step is to select a location that will blend into the landscape and thus be best protected from wind, driving rain, tornado twisters. Cypresses, which always surround a church on the hilltop, are utilized as partial windbreaks for tuquls of a hamlet just below.

The circular ground floor for the hut, usually about 20 feet in, is measured off by means of a central stick and a rope. The stick indicates where the central, roof-supporting post will be, and the circle indicates the walls. Both the selection of location and the measuring of the ground is done by a semi-specialist, an Amhara who acts

164 this is limited to occasional feasts due to the comparatively high cost of beef, and the "kosso" cure does seem to work. Dysentery kills many infants; amoebic dysentery sickens and kills adults also, especially near towns where the population is denser. The opening and increase in trade route communications since the Italian occupation has led to an increase in tuberculosis epidemics.[68]

312 164 Brooks, rivers and wells become increasingly more polluted as each dry season proceeds, and just after the flooding during the rainy season. Water carried long distances in skins is not safe either. The housewife, trying to manage as best as she can under the circumstances, carefully covers containers of food and drink, even of water stored overnight.

H. Mutual Aid

476 The simple living standard of the Amhara is somewhat improved by traits of mutual aid.

These may be listed in four categories, according to Amhara attitude:

(1) Mutual aid within the territorial or kinship unit, usually the hamlet;

(2) between neighboring hamlets that may or may not be kinfolk;

(3) within the religious sodality, the "mähabär";

(4) between individuals.

68. Simmons et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. pp.62-73

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

476 The reasons for such mutual aid, generally called "wänfäl" or "wämfäl", may be of time, space, economics, energy. The time element enters when a task requires completion within a specified period such as harvesting, threshing and winnowing. This is usually done withing the hamlet extended family, aided by other kinfolk. No remuneration is asked, but return services and a feast are expected. The energy element enters in such tasks as hut-building and roof-thatching ("wämfäl awätta", lit. he left to do mutual aid). This too is done within category (1), or with additional help from (2). The space element usually involves neighboring hamlets, on such tasks of common interest as digging an irrigation canal, called "bringing home the bread" ("däbbo awwälä"). Also, category (2) may be involved in the common pasturage, "adäbay" or"adäbabay", used by several hamlets, which includes the right to take water from the same brook, collect deadwood, cut branches and reeds for numerous usages. As a result of toleration and cooperation in category (2), ethnic lines may be crossed, for the neighboring hamlet may be of an ethnic occupation class, and/or of another religion, which often astonishes the urban Amhara and even the provincial one.

The factor of economics may affect all four categories, usually in the sequence of 1 - 4. A farmer may lend his team of oxen for plowing or threshing, to a neighbor who has none or has just lost an ox, in exchange for help with his harvest or other service, such as using a donkey or a mule.

●476 Consumption, beyond the territorial kinship group, often takes place within category (3). By way of extension, the"drinking together" of members of the religious sodality known as "mäḥabbär", who also take communion together in apostolic imitation, and who are usually of the same age groups and sex, leads to mutual trust in common purchases for consumption. Most common is the mutual purchase of an old cow or old ox for beef. This would otherwise be too expensive, and it must be distributed and consumed quickly due to the absence of any means of preservation(aside from drying). This mutual sharing agreement is called "qerchan", and is even more common in towns than in hamlets, because category (1) is absent and the need is felt for some near substitute, for mutual cooperation. They also share in the money realized from the sale of the skin, after the slaughtering.

Finally there is the economic partnership between individuals, ("wel"), resorted to usually after possibilities in categories (1),(2),(3) have been exhausted. It is more common in towns than in rural districts. But even among rural neighbors, two individuals may aid each other in clearing fallow land or new bush, or sell each other's produce on the market, particularly if they have quarrelled with their kinfolk. But such partnerships are usually of brief duration, while the first three categories of mutual aid are far more enduring.

575 esses or belong to prestige families. Women members
608 are considered "sisters" of the fraternity, and men "brothers". This establishes an artificial kinship relation which is taken very literally by the more pious. Therefore, a husband and wife never belong to the same
[582] mahabbar. Among the more pious, a member may not marry the widow of a mahabbar "brother", for this would be "levirate" which is expressly prohibited by the church as a prechristian custom.

575 [428] According to traditional law, the mäḥabbär inherits any property left by a deceased member who leaves no blood kin (consanguinal) , in preferance to any relatives he might have by marriage (affinal). The mahabbar
[426 476] acts as a mutual aid society for its members, as banker, making loans to members in financial need by raising internal subscriptions, and will even pay for the "tazkar" memorial feast 40 days after a member's death if his
[608] family cannot afford to do it properly. Family and personal problems of all kinds are discussed among "brothers" and "sisters", thus crossing the usual kinship
[584] lines of confidence and trust. Marriage arrangements between extended families having eligible youngsters are often first informally broached by women "sisters", who then agree to ask their husbands to act as intermediaries.

575 561 When children reach the "age of reason" (boys above 7 years of age) they may be accepted into a kind of junior mäḥabbär by older boys; girls above 10 years of age into junior sororities of older girls. When a

181 one's kin by doing manual labor, made necessary in some cases by
602 poverty, leads to outmigration from the district and often even from the province. Nepotism in obtaining good positions is the norm to such an extent that failure to act in this manner would be severely criticized by the traditional Amhara as the utmost in meanness. In fact, when an Amhara wants to make a particularly derogatory remark about another ethnic group, he says that they are mean to their own kin and quarrelsome within the kin group.

● [476] Cooperation and mutual aid, teamwork in agriculture, hut building, etc., are largely centered on the residential kin unit, notably the patrilocal hamlet.

554 A major culture goal in Amhara society is the assumption of the status personality of the "great man - noble" ("telleq säw"), in contra-distinction to the rustic peasant ("balagär"). However, this ambition is usually frustrated because social status is primarily inherited, along with "rest" land and the expectation of re-appointment to one's father's position and rank of nobility in the hierarchy. The door to advancement has traditionally been only through feudal warfare: loyal support of one's feudal lord was rewarded with "rest" land and higher rank. Even today a young nobleman must await formal promotion to his father's rank by the emperor, and this still contains an element of personal reward and punishment.

157 The personality of the rustic Amhara peasant is extroverted,
554 not burdened with the considerable self-restraint expected of the Amhara noble. The peasant is quick to express mirth, anger, and other emotions. He is not stodgy and slow in conversation like the proverbial peasant of Europe. In fact, because of the relative

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

for, and, in the height of the rains when some crops are already up, deep furrows are made at regular intervals, and enlarged from time to time to carry away the surplus rain water.

Irrigation on the shelves of the gorges has already been referred to. But a more elaborate system, the extent of which is shown schematically on the map, has been developed along the river Beressa and its tributary the Maka, which both provide a small flow of water throughout the dry season. The whole enterprise is an interesting example of concerted effort and communal organization—in neither of which are the Amharas usually believed to excel. Its object is to ensure an early crop of barley, to be reaped before the onset of the main rains in June.

The irrigation system has to be partly rebuilt every dry season for the dams, which are constructed of stones and heavy sods, are swept away in the rains. From each dam the water is led off into a well-established furrow, which is carried down in a divergent line from the river and sometimes cut out of the rock on steep scarps. From it minor channels, which can be opened or blocked at will, branch off to irrigate the intervening lands. There are however more complicated systems; thus the dam near Dilila feeds two irrigation channels, one on either bank of the river. The right-bank channel receives its water direct from the dam, that on the left bank by means of an aqueduct carried across the main stream just below the dam and likewise constructed of stones and sods. The flow is not sufficient to feed both at once, so that the water is excluded from one or other branch on different days of the week; while if rain happens to fall the whole system is switched off. The left-bank channel, after running almost parallel to the Beressa for nearly a mile and a half, has to cross obstacles in the form of two tributary streams. The second tributary crossed is a large one, and the irrigation channel, in order to maintain its level, makes a big loop upstream and is then carried over the tributary by means of another wall-like aqueduct 8 or 10 feet high.

During the latter part of the dry season the brilliant green crops of the irrigated area make a striking contrast to the brown and withered aspect of the surrounding countryside. The district (known as Atakilt or "garden") takes its name from this characteristic feature. There are other minor irrigation schemes on the plateau, as on the Dalecha river in the east and the Angolala river in the west of the sheet, but nothing on so large a scale or so elaborately organized as the Beressa system. The Atakilt plains also have historic interest as the scene of the battle, already mentioned, which resulted in the emperor Theodore's annexation of Shoa and the capture of young Menelik.

To conclude this brief account of the agricultural techniques of our area something must be said of terracing and its effect on the landscape. Nothing like the impressive and elaborate terracing practised in some eastern rice-growing countries is attempted in these parts. Many slopes are nevertheless unobtrustively terraced, both in the gorges and on the plateau, and it is not uncommon to see new terraces in process of formation. A wall (*gur*) is built on the lower side of the area selected for improvement, advantage being often taken of any natural flattening of the hillside. The *gur* has a vertical face on

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

have not seen each other for some time they will say: "How have you sojourned?" and kiss each other on both cheeks. Depending on the closeness of their relationship and the interval between meetings, this introductory question will be followed by a more or less lengthy series of other questions.[12] Even when one merely passes by the home of another, he is expected to cry out his greetings from afar.

In a number of other ways, the rough edges of social life are softened by Amhara codes of etiquette. Custom prescribes that measures of grain must be filled to overflowing at the market. Grammatical forms indicating respect are used between people who are not on intimate terms. Uncovering one's head is another way of indicating respect during the greeting. Still another form is to rise whenever someone enters the room, and wait until the new entrant has pronounced "*Bezgiēr!*" ("By God!") and sits down before reseating oneself.

On more superficial levels of interaction, then, Amhara behavior is apparently not egoistic. In the more fundamental areas of work and serious communication, a different picture appears.

Altogether there is little spontaneous *co-operation* in Amhara life. The Amhara prefers to work by himself, and, when he needs assistance, to order a subordinate to help him rather than to rely on friendly assistance from his neighbor. The distribution as well as the production of goods is carried out on an essentially individualistic basis. Each nuclear family takes care of its own provisions, even when the land being cultivated belongs to one of the parents and when more than one family lives within a single compound. (Even within the nuclear family, the proprietary sentiments of husband and wife regarding objects and land which each may own are rather lively.)

There are exceptions to this general rule. In some Amhara areas certain co-operative work forms have become institutionalized, for example. One of these forms, called *wanfal,* is invoked when there is a considerable amount of plowing or harvesting to be done, and a group of men in a given area take turns working on each other's land. Another form of co-operative work, called *waffar,* is employed when there is some extraordinary job to be done—putting on a new roof or digging land that is too steep for plowing—which cannot readily be reciprocated. In this case a man sends word around that on a certain day those who live in the area should come to work at his place, in reward for which generous quantities of *ṭallā* and *dābo* will be given them.

Despite the existence of special forms like *wanfal* and *waffar,* co-operation is only a peripheral feature of Amhara work activity. These forms involve but a temporary coincidence of individual interests. They are not used because co-operation as such is felt to be an important and natural part of social life—as seems to be the case, for example, among the Galla of Ethiopia.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Synchronization and Privacy

*121 184 571 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 181 571 533 535 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 181 571 591 576 The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown, first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are isolated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household, found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters (*ĭlfĭñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

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* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Ṭĭmqat day described in chap. iii.